

REMARKS

Claim Objections

In the Office action of August 29, 2002, the Examiner objected to claims 17, 19-20, 22-23, and 25-26, because of a number of informalities. Specifically, the Examiner objected to claims 17, 19-20, 22-23, and 25-26 because these claims recited the phrase "capable of." Applicants have amended these claims and deleted the objected phrase. The Examiner also objected to claim 23 for reciting "a crate" and suggested that Applicants substitute "the crate." Applicants have amended claim 23 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion.

Applicants have also taken the opportunity to further clarify the claimed invention and avoid any ambiguity in the claims by amending claims 17-20 to recite "the at least one object." The new recitation finds antecedent bases in the claim(s) from which claims 17-20 depend.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the objections to claims 17, 19-20, 22-23, and 25-26.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action of August 29, 2002, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-10, and 14-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) as being anticipated by *Williams et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,047,889), hereinafter *Williams*. The Examiner asserted that *Williams* discloses:

a method for sorting objects having machine-readable indicia thereon, comprising the steps of capturing object information from the machine-readable indicia on an object 15 (fig. 2; col. 7, lines 15+); determining, based on the routing information, a correct sort destination for the object

15 (col. 3, lines 12+); generating a visual command identifying the correct sort destination for the object 15 (col. 6, lines 36+), wherein the object information is captured as the object 15 moves with manual assistance (fig. 2), wherein the generating a visual command identifying the correct sort destination for the object is performed by illuminating an indicator 74 near the correct sort destination; measuring the weight of the object 15 by weighing the correct sort destination containing the object 15 (fig. 3A; col. 6, lines 24+); verifying that the object 15 has been placed/is not placed into the correct sort destination (col. 2, lines 18+; col. 3, lines 19+; col. 6, lines 37+; and col. 7, lines 19+), wherein the verifying step is performed using a scale/weight sensor 170; a management system comprising a control system 30, a user interface 50 wherein the user interface 50 is used to input an operator's identity and to output the operator's identity to the control system 30 (col. 7, lines 45+); the system communicating with the host network (col. 2, line 57 through col. 3, line 67).

Applicants respectfully disagree.

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, as amended, recites a method including, for example, a recitation of "creating a record for at least one object including the routing information, a weight, a sort rate, a sort accuracy, an idle time, a sort start and stop time, and a number of the objects processed"; and claim 16, as amended, recites a combination including, for example, a recitation of "a recording device for creating a record for at least one object including the routing information, a weight, a sort rate, a sort accuracy, an idle time, a sort start and stop time, and a number of the objects processed." Neither *Williams* nor *Johnson, Jr.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,262,597), hereinafter *Johnson*, disclose such a method or combination.

Applicants further submit that claims 1 and 16 have been amended to include a step and a structural element, respectively, including a similar recitation to that included in original claim 12. Therefore, claims 1 and 16 should be allowable over *Williams*. As

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the Examiner, correctly asserted in the Office Action, *Williams* does not teach or suggest the recitation of claims 12, which has now been incorporated into claims 1 and 16.

The Examiner, however, rejected claim 12 asserting that *Johnson* teaches that "a record of processing mails is stored in the processing unit 70 (col. 3 lines 4-68; and col. 5, lines 15 through col. 9, line 5)." Applicants respectfully submit that *Johnson* does not teach or suggest "creating a record for at least one object including the routing information, a weight, a sort rate, a sort accuracy, an idle time, a sort start and stop time, and a number of the objects processed," or "a recording device for creating a record for at least one object including the routing information, a weight, a sort rate, a sort accuracy, an idle time, a sort start and stop time, and a number of the objects processed."

At most, *Johnson* teaches or suggests that: i) "[t]he system also comprises a processing unit that includes means for storing received information and means for processing the stored information to derive processed information" (col. 3 lines 14-17); and ii) "[t]he method further comprises means for generating a report based on the information processed by the storing and processing means, and the means for weighing out the processed mail." (col. 3, lines 51-54)

The report generated from the processed information includes "a presort breakdown portion and a summary portion. The presort breakdown portion is separated into three sections each referencing a different international zone. Within each zone, there is included a country code, country name, number of units or pieces per country and the weight for the number of units per country. The summary portion includes a

breakdown into four sections. One section is the summary for the nonpresort airmail. The three other sections are for the three international zones or presort rate groups. In each section, the number of units or pieces, the number of pounds and the mathematics of the price per piece and price per pound are provided, along with a summary of the total postage rate. (col. 3, lines 55-68); and "[f]or each country, the report prints for each line: a unique country code, the country that is represented by the country code, the number of pieces or units of mail for that country which number has been derived by the mathematical calculations based on the calculated control weight and the measured (by the scale) total weight of mail for the country, and the total weight of the mail for that country. (col. 7, lines 30-37)

Therefore, *Johnson* does not teach or suggest "creating a record for at least one object including the routing information, a weight, a sort rate, a sort accuracy, an idle time, a sort start and stop time, and a number of the objects processed," or "a recording device for creating a record for at least one object including the routing information, a weight, a sort rate, a sort accuracy, an idle time, a sort start and stop time, and a number of the objects processed."

With respect to the rejections of claims 3-10 and 24-27, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable, at least for the same reasons as independent claims 1 and 16 and by virtue of their dependency on independent claims 1 and 16.

In view of the foregoing remarks and amendments, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) rejection of claims 1, 3-10, and 14-27.

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Claims Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Official Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 2 and 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Williams* in view of *Johnson*. Specifically, the Examiner asserted that *Williams* "fails to teach or fairly suggest the object information is captured as the object moves on a conveyor belt and creating a record including routing information for each object, weight, sort rate, etc." Applicants respectfully disagree.

The Examiner, however, asserted that *Johnson* "teaches the above limitation with a conveyor belt 80 for transporting all airmails (col. 4, lines 26-68) and a record of processing mails is stored in the processing unit 70 (col. 3, lines 4-68; col. 5, line 15 through col. 9, line 5)." The Examiner also asserted that "it would have been obvious to an artisan of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate a conventional conveyor belt as taught by [*Johnson*] into the teachings of [*Williams*] in order to provide [*Williams*] with a time consuming system, wherein the operator does not have to lift or move the object to the scanning area, thus reducing [labor]."

The Examiner further asserted that "such modification would [make *Williams* a more] organized and a more secure system wherein all object relating information being [recorded] in the system for later use/checkup in the event of lost or [misallocation]. Accordingly, such modification would have been an obvious extension as taught by [*Williams*] and therefore an obvious expedient."

In response to the rejection of claim 12, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 12 has been cancelled; therefore, no response is necessary. With respect to the rejection of claims 2, 11, and 13, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are

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allowable, at least for similar reasons as amended claim 1 and by virtue of their dependency on claim 1. As discussed above, *Johnson* does not cure the deficiencies of *Williams* with respect to amended claim 1.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX TO AMENDMENT OF JANUARY 29, 2003

Version With Markings To Show Changes Made

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claim 12 and amend claims 1, 13, 16-20, 22-23, and 25-26 as follows:

1. (Amended) A method for sorting objects having machine-readable indicia thereon, comprising the steps of:

capturing object information from the machine-readable indicia on an object;

determining routing information from the object information;

determining, based on the routing information, a correct sort destination for the object; [and]

generating a visual and/or audio command identifying the correct sort destination for the object[.] ; and

creating a record for at least one object including the routing information, a weight, a sort rate, a sort accuracy, an idle time, a sort start and stop time, and a number of the objects processed.

13. (Amended) The method of claim [12] 1, further comprising the steps of:

uploading the record to a database; and

transmitting data from the database to one or more of an object tracking database, a billing database, and a scan central server.

16. (Amended) An object sorting system comprising:

a rack system comprising a plurality of sort destination modules, each sort destination module further comprising a sort destination for holding at least one object; and

a management system comprising:

a control system;

an information capture device for reading machine-readable indicia from each object and for outputting the information to the control system; [and]

an audio system and/or visual indicators for providing instructions to an operator[.]; and

a recording device for creating a record for at least one object including the routing information, a weight, a sort rate, a sort accuracy, an idle time, a sort start and stop time, and a number of the objects processed.

17. (Amended) The object sorting system of claim 16 wherein the sort destination modules further comprise at least one indicator identifying that [an] the at least one object should be placed in the sort destination and wherein the control system [is capable of outputting] outputs a signal to the at least one indicator for each of the plurality of sort destination modules.

18. (Amended) The object sorting system of claim 16 wherein the sort destination modules further comprise at least one placement sensor for monitoring when [an] the at least one object is placed in the sort destination and wherein the control system [is capable of inputting] inputs information from the at least one placement sensor for each of the plurality of sort destination modules and determining which sort destination the at least one object was placed in and when the at least one object was placed in the sort destination.

19. (Amended) The object sorting system of claim 16 wherein the sort destination modules further comprise a scale for weighing the sort destination and wherein the control system [is capable of inputting and recording] inputs and records the weight of the sort destination containing the at least one object.

20. (Amended) The object sorting system of claim 16 wherein the sort destination modules further comprise:

at least one indicator identifying that [an] the at least one object should be placed in the sort destination;

at least one placement sensor for monitoring when [an] the at least one object is placed in the sort destination; and

a scale for weighing the sort destination;

wherein the control system [is capable of]:

[outputting] outputs a signal to the at least one indicator for each of the plurality of sort destination modules;

[inputting] inputs information from the at least one placement sensor for each of the plurality of sort destination modules;

[determining] determines which sort destination the at least one object was placed in and when the at least one object was placed in the sort destination; and

[inputting] inputs and [recording] records the weight of the sort destination containing the at least one object.

22. (Amended) The object sorting system of claim 21, wherein the user interface is [capable of being used] used to input an operator's identity and to output the operator's identity to the control system.

23. (Amended) The object sorting system of claim 20, wherein each of the plurality of sort destination modules further comprises:

a crate placement sensor for monitoring whether [a] the crate is within the sort destination, and

a second indicator for indicating, when [a] the crate should be changed based upon a predetermined parameter associated with the crate.

25. (Amended) The object sorting system of claim 24, wherein the controller area network adaptor card [is capable of communicating] communicates with at least one of the plurality of interface boards and the controller area network bus, auto-terminating the bus, providing a unique node address for each of the plurality of interface boards, and distributing power to the interface boards.

26. (Amended) The object sorting system of claim 25, wherein the controller area network adaptor card [is capable of communicating] communicates with the interface boards, each interface board communicating with the first indicator, the second indicator, and the scale, and additionally capable through additional I/O ports to interface with the sort destination placement sensor and the object placement sensor.

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